

EXPANSION OF LSU HILLTOP ARBORETUM IN BATON ROUGE WILL BE LEED CERTIFIED

Pending approval from the LSU Board of Regents, construction will begin next year on an expansion of the LSU Hilltop Arboretum in Baton Rouge, which will result in a 2,050 square-foot facility at 11855 Highland Road. Approximately \$1.33 million was generated in funding for the expansion over the course of nine years through the fundraising efforts of the Friends of Hilltop Arboretum, a non-profit organization established in 1982 that provides operational support, fundraising activities and educational programs that engage the broader community.

Donated in 1981 by former LSU postmaster Emory Smith, the arboretum currently serves as an outdoor educational tool for LSU students, while also providing programs that focus on Louisiana gardening, plants and landscaping with special emphasis on planting for a healthier future in our own backyards for the general public. To help cover a portion of Hilltop's operating expenses, approximately \$35,000 each year is generated from the sale of native and adapted plants grown out on the site by volunteers from the Hodge Podge Nursery.

The new structure, slated for completion by late 2011, will support the arboretum in its use as a supplement to the LSU campus classroom. The site will provide a more direct hands-on approach to learning as it relates to environmental science disciplines such as botany, forestry and landscape architecture.

Upon completion, the facility will become the first facility in the LSU system to earn LEED certification. LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an international standard of recognition that certifies a facility meets the criteria for green building. Specifically, the facility must have an energy friendly design which promotes energy and resource conservation, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction and improved indoor environmental features.

"The facility will be a multi-purpose room complete with audio and visual equipment as well as a catering kitchen," said Peggy Coates, Executive Director of Hilltop. "It will be available for rental for various functions, and will have the capability to be reconfigured for various arrangements in order to accompany community functions, student field trips and other educational-oriented activities."

"Several other site improvement projects around the arboretum have been completed in the past two years," said Coates. "Restoration of the cathedral area has included the planting of new trees to replace those lost in recent hurricanes, and an ADA accessible elevated boardwalk has been built as a feature to accommodate visitors with special needs."

For more information, please go online to: www.lsu.edu/hilltop, or contact Peggy Davis Coates, Friends of Hilltop Arboretum, at (225) 767-6916, or email: pdavis@lsu.edu.



Artist's rendering of the LSU Hilltop Arboretum expansion project